

WEC a culture of safety

Undergraduate and graduate
student orientation, Fall 2009.




Wildlife is a hazardous occupation

How many friends, acquaintances, professional colleagues do you know injured or died during field work?

(my count is 7!- *review staff and students present*)

- Not as high as commercial fishermen, miners, cops, truckers, steelworkers, heavy construction
- But higher than lawyers, accountants, English teachers etc.

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- Safety is a professional skill and obligation of the wildlife professional along with other skills and knowledge like biology, wildlife management techniques, statistics, field techniques, GIS skills, writing.
 - Our goal is to have all of you treat safety as a normal, routine necessity of the work, not a special add-on or an unusual event.



Most dangerous field activities

- Aircraft -aerial surveys, low level flight, helicopters- 5 dead in FL last year!
- Motor vehicles- driving to and from the field is the most dangerous part!
- Boats and other watercraft- it takes 2 minutes and 2 inches of water to drown



Most common accidents

(review of 8,000 Earthwatch records)

- **Cuts, scrapes and falls** (footwear and inattention)
- **Sprains** and pulled muscles (lifting, overexertion)
- **Infected insect bites** (protective clothing, deet)
- **Sunburn** (protective clothing, sunscreen)
- **Dehydration** (non carbonated, non alcoholic fluids)

How do accidents usually happen?

- Very rarely a single unanticipated event

- Usually, a chain or cascade of events

For the want of nail a shoe was lost

For the want of shoe a horse

a message

A battle

A war

a kingdom etc.

- Recognize the chain and break it

Ooops! I thought you set the
handbrake?



What must you do to be safe?

- Take personal responsibility for yourself
 - Your clothing, footwear, protective equipment, preparation,
- Advise of pre-existing conditions
 - Fitness, obesity, medical conditions, fatigue
- Inform yourself
 - Numerous sources of hazard specific information
- Prepare before you go to the field
- Support each other in safety
 - Information, Preparation, Equipment-
it's a culture

Air Safety

- WEC has never lost a person, but this is serious stuff!
- If you are going to fly in small planes or helicopters in your graduate work for any reason (surveys, getting to field sites, etc),
 - You and your graduate professor must follow new WEC rules about aircraft contracting
 - You must take a short safety course
 - If you attempt to establish a purchase order with a flight company without following WEC safety policies, your purchase order will be turned down.
- For more info about flight safety, check out the WEC website, or talk to Dr. Franklin Percival or Dr. Peter Frederick.

Wec.ufl.edu - Safety

one-stop-shop for your safety needs

- WEC Aircraft safety protocols
- Field Safety Guidelines
- Boat and airboat operation requirements and tests
- [UF 15-Passenger Van safety training](#) – This certification is required before you can operate a UF owned 15-passenger van
- The UF College of Medicine [CPR and Safety Training Center](#)
- The University of California, Berkley [field safety document](#).
- [UF Dive Safety Program](#) – UF Contact Cheryl Thacker
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission [Boater Safety Course](#)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission [Hunter Safety Course](#)
- More coming at [wec.ufl.edu Safety](#)

Safety- it's a culture